

**The Life of  
St. Christina  
the Astonishing**



by

**Thomas de Cantimpré**



Thomas de Cantimpré

VITA CHRISTINAE MIRABILIS

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Latin Text with English Translation

by Mark Reynolds

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FAYETTEVILLE

MMXV

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This is a new translation of the Life of St. Christina the Astonishing by the Dominican preacher and theologian Thomas de Cantimpré. Written in 1232, just eight years after her death, it recounts the sometimes spectacular exploits of Christina in her native village of St. Trond, Belgium and its environs. Regarded in her youth as demon-possessed and cruelly persecuted because of her strange behavior, in the course of time Christina came to be revered by her fellow townsmen as a holy woman and prophetess. It is a powerful and provocative story told by Thomas de Cantimpré in a crisp and vivid style.

(A note on the text: De Cantimpré's life of Christina was first published by the Bollandists in *Acta Sanctorum*, Antverpiae 1727, vol. 32 (Jul. tom. v) p. 637-660. Like almost all the other 60-plus volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum*, it is available online. The editor of the life, Joannes Pinius, consulted five manuscripts in composing his text, as he describes in his preface (p. 639). The current text is an edited version of Pinius. To the best of my knowledge, a Latin edition from original sources wasn't published again until 2021, in Brussels, as a kind of appendix to a scintillating work titled *Christine l'Admirable: Vie, chants et merveilles* by Sylvain Piron. The text was edited by Piron and his collaborator, Arnelle Le Huërou, who examined and documented all of the twenty or so manuscripts of the life known to be extant. It's not a full critical edition, as they acknowledge, but very helpful and much appreciated. They also provided a new French translation.)

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# The Life of St. Christina the Astonishing

**Thomas de Cantimpré**

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## *Prologue*

1. As we prepare to write the life of that memorable virgin of Christ Christina, let us begin by quoting the venerable Jacques, Bishop of Acre and later Cardinal of the Roman Curia, who relates the following of Christina in his *Life of Blessed Marie d'Oignies*: "I saw another woman (he means Christina) in whom God performed remarkable works. When she had lain dead for some time, but before her body was buried in the ground, her soul returned to her body and she was restored to life. And the Lord granted her request, that she be allowed, while living in body in the world, to suffer the pains of purgatory. And so for a long time she was remarkably afflicted by the Lord, so that at times she wallowed in fire, and in winter would remain for a long time in icy waters, and sometimes was even compelled to enter the tombs of the dead. After performing this penance, she lived in such serenity and obtained such grace from the Lord that many times, rapt in the spirit, she led the souls of the departed to purgatory, or escorted them through purgatory without injury to herself all the way to the kingdom of heaven."

2. This account of her, as we have said, was related by the venerable Bishop Jacques. The rest I myself have written, an unworthy brother of the Order of Preachers, for the edification of my readers and especially for the glory of Christ. Though my manner of writing is homely, I am at least certain of the truthfulness of the account that has been told me. And I can with good reason say that I am certain, since for many of the events I have described I have fully as many witnesses as people living at that time in the town of St. Trond possessed of wit and reason. Nor did these events take place in seclusion but in clear public view. Nor has so much time passed that these events have been buried in oblivion, for as I write this no more than eight years have passed since her death. As for the other things which no one could know save her alone, these have been personally told to me by people

who have sworn that they heard them from Christina herself.

3. And let him who reads of these events know that I have believed such witnesses, who would never stray from the truth even at the risk of losing their heads. We acknowledge what is true, that our tale surpasses all human understanding, since these things could in no way happen in the course of nature, and yet they are possible for the Creator. Nor would I in any way have presumed to write of these incidents, had not the venerable Bishop Jacques already given his testimony on the more prominent of them. Let us then begin our task and tell first of her upbringing, and then set forth the rest of her deeds as we have learned of them from very reliable and accurate accounts.

*Here begins the life of Blessed Christina surnamed the Astonishing.*

4. So then the illustrious virgin of Christ Christina was born in the town of St. Trond in Hesbaye to parents of good repute. When her parents died she was left with two older sisters. Thereupon her sisters, desiring to pursue a religious way of life, decided that the elder sister should devote herself to prayer, the middle one should tend to the house, and the younger sister Christina should watch over the flocks as they went to graze. As soon as this was done, Christ the Comforter did not forsake the one who was assigned the humbler and viler task. Nay, He grants to her the grace of inner sweetness, and He visited her often and made her privy to heavenly secrets. And yet she remained unknown to all, known to God alone, all the better known for being more secret.

*How Blessed Christina died.*

5. It happened then that her body grew weak from the inward practice of contemplation and she departed this life. Her lifeless body was then placed on view and she was greatly mourned by her friends and sisters. When morning came she was carried to the church. And when an offering of masses was being made for her burial, her body suddenly stirred and rose up on the bier, and straightway she ascended upward like a bird to the rafters of the church. Then all who were present fled save her oldest sister, who remained there in terror. Christina stayed motionless in the rafters until the end of the Mass, and then constrained by the priest with the sacrament she was compelled to descend. For, as some say, the subtlety of her spirit abhorred the odor of human bodies. Then she returned home with her sisters and was given food to restore her strength. Afterward her spiritual friends came to her and asked her to tell them what she had seen and experienced.



*How she was led from her body, and how she was returned to her body and restored to life.*

6. "As soon as I died," she said, "ministers of light, who are angels of God, received my spirit, and they led me to a dark and horrible place that was filled with the souls of men. The torments that I saw in that place were so cruel and extreme that no tongue could suffice to describe them. And I saw there many departed whom I had known before in the flesh. Feeling great pity for these wretched souls, I asked what place this was. I was thinking that it was hell. And my guides answered me: 'This place is purgatory, where repentant souls suffer punishment for their sins in life.' Then they led me to the torments of hell and I recognized there too some whom I had known when they were alive.

7. "Next I was brought to the throne of divine majesty in Paradise. And when I saw the Lord rejoicing and congratulating me, I was happy beyond all measure, thinking that I would remain thereafter with the Lord forever. And the Lord immediately responded to my desire: 'Truly, my dearest,' he said, 'you shall abide here with me, but now I give you two choices. You may either remain now here with me, or you can return to your body, and there through your mortal body undergo the punishments of the immortal soul without any harm to the body, and by these punishments deliver all those souls which you pitied in purgatory. In this way, by the example of your life and penance, the living might be converted to me and turn away from sin, and when all this is accomplished you may at last return to me richly blessed with rewards in abundance.' I answered without any hesitation that I chose to return under the condition that he had proposed.

8. "The Lord congratulated me for my answer and straightway bid that my soul be returned to its body. And behold how swift the angels are at the command of the Lord! For at the moment when the refrain, *Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world*, was first recited at the Mass celebrated for me, my soul stood before the throne of divine majesty. But when *Lamb of God* was said the third time, I had been restored to my body by the swift angels. This was the manner of my departure and return, and I was granted new life for the reform of men. Now then be not disturbed at those things you will see in me, because those things that God will ordain with me are beyond understanding. For such sights have not been seen among mortals." Hearing these things her friends were struck with awe and awaited in amazement what would follow.

*How she was seized by her friends and liberated by the Lord, and was nourished by her own virginal breast.*

9. After this, then, Christina fled in wondrous horror from the presence of men and took refuge in the wilderness, in trees, and atop towers or churches or other high places. They thought that she was possessed by demons, and after great effort they finally captured her and bound her in iron chains. Then she suffered many punishments and afflictions, being especially distressed by the odor of humans. One night, by the aid of God, the chains and fetters were loosed and she escaped, fleeing to the remote forests of the wilderness where she lived in the trees like the birds. And when she was in need of food (for though her body was of a most subtle nature she could not live without nourishment) and was tormented by the sharpest hunger, she nevertheless chose not to return, but to remain alone with the Lord in the secluded wilderness. And so uttering a prayer to the Lord, she humbly asked that He look upon her anguish with the eyes of his mercy. Immediately she looked down and saw, contrary to the very laws of nature, her dry, virginal breasts dripping with rich milk. A wondrous thing, and unheard of in all ages since the time of the incomparable Virgin Mother of Christ! Consuming then the dripping liquid for food, for nine weeks she was nursed on the virginal milk of her own breast. In the meanwhile she was sought by her people, who found her and seized her and just as before bound her in iron chains; but in vain.

*How she entered water.*

10. For she was set free by the Lord and came to the city of Liège. Craving the sacred flesh of the immaculate Paschal Lamb, she begged the priest of St. Christopher's to fortify her for her many sufferings with Holy Communion. And when the priest had promised to administer it, but said he was not free to do so at that moment, she could not suffer the delay and went to the priest of another church and begged for the body of Christ. He assented to her prayers and gave her communion. Then driven by some powerful impulse, she suddenly fled and departed the city. The priest was astonished by her flight and ran after her. He was joined by the other priest, the priest of St. Christopher's, and they pursued her all the way to the river Meuse. Rejoicing that the water blocked her way and that they would be able to capture her, they are dumbstruck as they behold the woman, in a real body yet one that seemed a phantom's, enter the deep, swirling waters and emerge unharmed on the farther bank.

*How she was tormented in fire.*

11. Then Christina began to perform those acts for which she had been sent back by the Lord. She used to enter the fiery ovens in which bread was about to be baked, and was tormented by the flames just as one of us would

be, so that she cried out horribly in pain, and yet when she emerged from the oven her body revealed no outer signs of injury. When ovens were not available she would throw herself into a large fire in a person's house, or place only her hands or feet in it, and hold them there for so long that it was only by a divine miracle they were not burned to ashes. She would also at times climb into cauldrons of boiling water that reached her chest, or her waist, depending on the size of the cauldron, and pour scalding water over the parts of her body that were not immersed, and shriek like a woman in labor, but when she emerged there was no sign of injury.

*How she was tormented in water.*

12. In times of icy cold she would often remain beneath the waters of the Meuse River for a long time, even for six days or more. But the priest who was responsible for her care would come, and standing on the riverbank he would entreat her in the name of Christ and then she was compelled to return. In winter too she used to stand beneath the mill wheel and let the water run over her head and limbs. Sometimes too she used to float in the water and fall with the water upon the rotating wheel, and yet her body showed no sign of injury.

*How she was tormented on wheels and gibbets.*

13. On the wheels which were once used to torture pirates, she used to bend her arms and legs the way that a torturer would, and yet when she descended her limbs were unbroken. She used to go to the gibbet too and hang herself with a noose among the robbers who were hanging there, and she would hang there suspended for one or two days. She also often entered the tombs of the dead and bewailed the sins of men.

*How she was tormented in thorns and brambles, and chased by dogs.*

14. Sometimes in the middle of the night she would arise and set all the dogs in the town of St. Trond to barking, and she would run ahead of them like a fleeing animal and the dogs would pursue her, and they would chase her through the woods and the thorny thickets so that every part of her body was torn, and yet when she washed off the blood there was not a trace of a wound. She used to cut herself too with thorns and briars, so that her whole body seemed drenched with blood. Whence the many people who beheld this frequent sight marveled at how there could be such an abundance of blood in a single body. For besides shedding her blood in these ways, she would also very often draw a great deal of blood from a vein.

*On the subtle nature of her body.*

15. Her body was so light and subtle that she could walk on steep heights and perch in the trees like a sparrow on the thinnest of branches.

*The form she assumed when she prayed.*

16. When she wanted to pray she was compelled to retreat to the tops of trees or towers or other high places, so that isolated from others she might find rest for her spirit. Moreover, when she was praying and the divine grace of contemplation descended upon her, she would curl all her limbs up into a ball as if they were made of warm wax, so that her body was unrecognizable and seemed only a spherical form. And when this spiritual intoxication had passed and normal sensations returned to her limbs, then her body that had been curled up like a hedgehog sprang back to its proper shape and her limbs were extended, which had previously been compressed in a shapeless mass. And she frequently stood erect atop fence posts, where she would chant the Psalms. It was clearly very painful for her at these times to touch the earth.

*How her leg was broken and she was seized, and how she was liberated by the Lord.*

17. Because of this and similar behavior, her sisters and friends were embarrassed not a little, because men thought that she was full of demons. And so they met with a very strong and wicked man whom they paid to pursue and capture her and bind her in iron chains. And that wicked man pursued her through the wilderness and was unable to grab her with his hands, and when he was finally able to come within reach of her he broke her shinbone with a club. She was carried home and her sisters engaged a physician to treat her broken shinbone. She was therefore taken to Liège in a wagon.

18. The physician, aware of her strength, shut her up in a cellar walled on all sides, and she was bound fast with chains to a pillar and the doors were bolted. And when the physician had bound her shinbone with medicinal bandages and departed, Christina removed what had been applied, thinking it unworthy for her wounds to be treated by any physician other than our savior Jesus Christ. Nor was she deceived in her faith in the Almighty. For one night, when the spirit of the divine had rushed into her, the chains with which she had been bound were loosed and she was healed of all discomfort. She walked about the floor of the cellar, dancing and praising and blessing Him for whom alone she had chosen to live and die. Her spirit feeling itself cramped by the confines of the cellar, she snatched up a rock from the floor and with a violent effort made a hole in the wall. And if I may be permitted

to use a comparison, just as an arrow flies more swiftly the more tightly it is pulled back on the bow, so too, it is said, her spirit which was so tightly confined flew like a bird through the empty air along with her fleshly body.

*How oil flowed from her breasts, and so her friends sent her away free.*

19. Yet not even then did her sisters and friends cease to pursue her. For when she returned and they were able to capture her, they bound her fast with chains to a wooden post and she was fed like a dog on only water and a little bread. So that Christ then might reveal in her an extraordinary miracle of His power, He allowed her for a time to be subdued and to suffer tribulations. So then her buttocks and shoulders were chafed by the hardness of the wood and began to putrefy, and the pain of her wounds made her listless and she was unable to eat her bread. As there was no one who showed compassion for her sufferings, the Lord showed her pity in a miraculous way, and accomplished that remarkable miracle in her that was unknown to all previous generations. For her virginal breasts began to flow with the clearest oil. She used this as a seasoning for her dry bread, and as an ointment, and she rubbed it on the festering wounds of her body. When her sisters and friends saw this they began to weep, and offering no further resistance to the will of God in the miracles He performed in Christina, they freed her from her bonds, and throwing themselves on the ground they begged pardon for the wrong they had done her, and they sent her away free.

*How a common prayer was made by the religious for her.*

20. Having then the liberty to do as she pleased, she suffered punishments for the sins of men, as we have described above. And when many came every day from regions near and far and even from remotest lands to see the miraculous workings of God in Christina, the religious men and women who lived in the town were fearful lest the supreme wondrousness of the miracles might surpass human understanding, and the bestial minds of men turn her divine deeds into demonic acts. They were thinking especially of when in fleeing the presence of men she ascended high places like a bird, and remained for a long time in the water like a fish. They therefore beseeched the Lord with earnest prayers that he might temper his miracles in Christina and bring them more into accord with the human condition. Nor did the Lord spurn their prayers and pious tears.

*How her life was tempered to men.*

21. It happened one day that she was violently agitated by the spirit and fled to a certain church in the town of Wellen, and finding there a sacred

baptismal font that was uncovered she plunged herself into it. When this was done, it is said that from that time forward her manner of life was more in accord with the ways of men, and she was calmer, and could better endure the odors of humans, and could dwell among men.

*How she was compelled by the spirit to live on alms.*

22. She frequently took the sacrament of the body and blood of the Lord in holy devotion, and especially on Sunday, and she received from it strength of body, she said, and the greatest joy of the spirit. She had abandoned her possessions for the sake of Christ, and what properly belonged to her by right of inheritance, and for food and drink she depended solely on the common alms that she begged for daily door to door, so that she might bear the sins of those on whose alms she fed. She used to say that the reason she was compelled by the spirit of God to beg for alms from wicked men was so that through their offerings they might become horrified of their sins and repent of their life. For she said that nothing so moves God to feel mercy for sinners than when sinners feel mercy for their neighbors. Whence that saying of a wise man: Never could mercy, never could pity fail to find favor on the final day. And so that what we have said might be revealed by example, let us confirm it by a certain deed of Christina's.

*On the man from whom she received drink.*

23. It happened one day that she was afflicted by God with an intolerable thirst, and she rushed to the table of a certain very wicked man who was dining in splendor, and when she asked him for something to drink he was moved by an unwonted feeling of pity, and she was given a little wine to drink. Wherefore Christina said that contrary to the opinion of all who knew the man, he had been called in death to the pardon of penance and contrition.

*What she experienced when she ate the alms of evildoers; on her food and clothing.*

24. This was why, as we said, she was forced to beg for alms from the wicked. And yet when she ate something given to her as alms that was acquired unjustly, it seemed to her that she was swallowing the flesh of frogs and toads or the entrails of serpents. When eating such things she would cry out as if in labor: "O Christ, what are you doing to me? Why do you torment me so?" And pounding her chest and body she would say: "O wretched soul, what is it you desire? Why do you crave these horrible things? Why do you feed on this filth?" This then was her torment when she ate something that was acquired unjustly. And yet she suffered no less

torment when a wicked man denied her something that she asked for. It happened once that she took by force something that an impious man denied her, saying: "Although you refuse it now, yet later you will not be sorry that it has been taken from you, and what does not profit you now will profit you then."

25. When there was a sleeve missing on her tunic or a hood on her scapular, the spirit within advised her whom she should receive it from, and when she encountered him she asked him for it. If he gave it to her she thanked him; if not, she took it against his will and sewed it onto her clothing. Nor was she embarrassed if the sleeves on her tunic were ill-matched and of different colors. Her clothing consisted of a white tunic and a white scapular that covered her whole body all the way down to her feet. Frequently it was sewn together with no other thread than that of the bark of the linden tree, or with willow osiers or small wooden sticks. She wore no shoes, going barefoot no matter the season. For food she ate vile and wretched stuff, and the leavings from dishes which should have been cast out she boiled in water and took this as food with very hard bread made of bran, but which she first softened in water. She fed on this fare after keeping a continuous fast of two or, more often, three days.

*Of her grief and lamentations for the damned, and of her joy for the saved.*

26. She abhorred honors and glory with the greatest fervor, and used to say that it is for things like these that those souls are most tormented in hell or purgatory, to whom Christ had given in life the knowledge of His truth. She always walked about like one grief-stricken or in mourning, and little wonder, since every day God revealed to her whether those who were dying merited either salvation or damnation. When someone died in the city who she knew through the spirit had been damned for his sin, she wept and writhed and contorted her body in every direction, and bent back her arms and fingers as if they were soft and boneless. Her pain was intolerable to all who saw her, and none was so unfeeling that he could behold it without the greatest contrition and compassion. But for those departing life who would be saved, she leapt about in so lively a dance that it was wondrous strange to see her in such merriment. Whence those who knew the miraculous power of her spirit could easily recognize in her joy or sorrow the fate of those who were dying in the city.

27. She attended to the dying most willingly and with great kindness, urging them to the confession of sins and the fruit of penance, to the hope of eternal joy and the dread of the flames of destruction. Nor did she attend only to dying Christians, but with remarkable compassion she would anxiously minister to Jews as well, of whom there was a very large

congregation in the city. She related that the Lord Christ is most merciful, yet only to those who choose to turn to Him; that most unwillingly does He exact punishment on men for their sins and feels great sorrow when the sins of men compel Him to do so, and that He diligently seeks occasions whereby He can bring the wretched to salvation. And she spoke with remarkable grace when she said these things about the Lord Christ.

28. She related too that there was a place near hell established by God for the purging of those who had been polluted by enormous sins but who had at the point of death repented. She said that this place held such horrible torments that it did not differ from hell in its punishments, except that those who suffered these torments could sigh in hope of forgiveness. She said that demons preside over their torture, and that the demons to whom they are delivered for torture torment them all the more fiercely because they know that they have a shorter time to torment them.

*How she was renowned for the spirit of prophecy; how she prophesied a massacre.*

29. She was renowned for the spirit of prophecy in many things, and she forewarned many for their salvation, and accused many in private of secret and hidden sins and called them to penance. When that unhappy encounter took place between the Duke of Brabant and his adversaries, where in the place called Steppes so many hundreds of men were slain, on that very day blessed Christina cried out like a woman in labor and said: "Woe, woe! I see the air filled with swords and blood. Run, sisters, run! Beseech the Lord and weep, lest in his wrath He withhold his mercies." And she said to a certain nun in the convent of St. Catherine: "Run, daughter, run swiftly to prayer, and beseech the Lord on behalf of your father, because he is now in the gravest peril!"

*How she prophesied the apostasy of a nun.*

30. And when a certain nun of the same cloister was considering leaving the convent, Christina said of her: "O empty vessel, who will bring the greatest disgrace to the convent!" Nor was it long afterwards that the nun left the order as Christina had prophesied, and through her dissoluteness brought the greatest disgrace to the convent. And when the nuns of the convent were most stubbornly opposed to allowing this same nun to return to do penance, Christina upbraided them, saying: "Although you consider her damnation of small importance, her soul was not so little esteemed by Christ, who deigned to shed His blood and die for its sake." Nor did Christina cease repeating these things until the penitent nun was allowed to return.



*How she protected a certain noble on pilgrimage by her prayers.*

31. There was a certain noble traveling across the sea to the sepulcher of the Lord. The nobleman's wife pleaded with Christina, imploring her to bring him back safely by her prayers. Christina was annoyed by her plea, yet she offered to God many prayers, labors and vows for the knight and returned him safely home, and said to his wife as if in irritation: "Lo, because of your insistent pleading I have returned your husband in safety to you, but know now that you will not delight in his presence for long." The truth of her words was soon revealed when a few days later that nobleman departed from life and left his wife and children in sorrow and desolation.

*How she prophesied the capture of Jerusalem and announced the day when it was captured.*

32. And long before it happened she prophesied that the sacred land of Jerusalem would be made subject to the heathen Saracens. And when the day came that Jerusalem was captured by Saladin, king of the Persians, along with the sepulcher of the Lord and the cross of Christ, Christina was in the castle of Looz and knew of the event in the spirit. Wildly rejoicing in this event, she was asked by those present to explain the reason for her great exultation. "Rightly," she said, "do I exult, because the Lord Christ, exulting in joy today with the angels, has provided an occasion whereby a great number of the human race might be saved."

33. And when those present inquired what this occasion was, she said: "Know that today the Holy Land has been delivered to the hands of the heathens, and a great occasion for the saving of souls has been thereby provided. For though the Holy Land was made sacred by the pains of His passion, yet it is destined to perish with the world at the end of the world, and Christ thinks it worthy to bear the outrage of its shameful surrender, since through its recovery souls redeemed by His blood which shall never perish will be converted from the way of impiety to the way of righteousness, and men will shed their blood in this affair and in great devotion will die for Christ as He died for them." Then all who were present were struck with wonder, and some of them mark the time and discover later, after the news had time to reach them across the sea, [that Jerusalem had fallen] on that same day.

*How she prophesied a great famine.*

34. She also prophesied a long time beforehand a very great famine that took place around the year 1170. Christina prophesied too a great many other things which have already come to pass or which we believe will come

to pass in the future.

*Of her rapture in the spirit and her miraculous song in the convent.*

35. She became close friends with the nuns of St. Catherine's outside the town of St. Trond, and at times when she was sitting and speaking with them about Christ, she would suddenly and unexpectedly be seized by the spirit and her body would begin to spin round and round like a top that children play with, with such violence that her limbs became a shapeless blur. And when she had spun in this way for a long time her whole body lay still, as if exhausted by the violent exertion, and then between her throat and chest there sounded a wondrous melody, which no mortal could understand or imitate by any artifice. That song of hers had only the flexibility and tones of music; the words of the melody, if indeed they can be called words, were incomprehensible. In the meanwhile, no sound or breath escaped from her mouth or nose; the angelic melody sounded only between her throat and chest.

36. In the meantime she lay motionless and her eyelids were closed as if in sleep. Then after a while she returned to herself somewhat, like one intoxicated, and she arose truly intoxicated and loudly cried: "Bring the convent to me, that we might praise Jesus of sublime goodness for His miracles!" Then when the nuns had hurriedly gathered from every part of the convent (for they took great joy in Christina's consolement) she began: "Te Deum laudamus," and finished the hymn with everyone accompanying her. But later, when she had fully recovered her senses and learned from the others what she had done, and how she had summoned the convent to praise Christ, she fled in shame and embarrassment, or if she was forcibly kept from fleeing by one of the nuns, she was consumed with grief beyond measure, and called herself stupid and foolish.

*How she reviled the world for not recognizing its Creator.*

37. And sometimes when she had recovered from one of these states and returned to herself again, she would say with great bitterness of heart: "O wretched and miserable world that does not recognize its Maker! Why do you not serve Him? Why do you not consider His long-suffering patience? If you beheld His goodness, you could not be turned away, though another world gainsay you, but would love Him. But you have turned away, O wretched world. You have closed your eyes and chosen not to see." Saying this, she shrieked like a woman in labor and contorted her limbs and wallowed on the ground wailing loudly, and asked again and again why the world did not recognize its Creator.

*How she left her home and came to Looz.*

38. After this she left her home and kin and went to a castle on the border of Germany called Looz, where she stayed for nine years with a certain recluse, a woman of most devout life named Yvette, and there God worked wondrous things through her. Many of the things I have written about Christina I heard revealed to me by this recluse. Indeed, I came to her from a distant region in France for this very reason.

39. In this place, then, Christina attended matins every night, and when everyone had departed from the church and the doors were barred, as she walked the pavement of the church she sang a song of such sweetness that it seemed more the song of angels than of men. This song was so remarkable to hear that it surpassed the sound of all musical instruments and all human voices. Yet it was not as fine and not nearly so lovely as the song of praise which sounded between her throat and chest when she was in a state of ecstasy. This song, I say, was in Latin, and graced with wonderful rhymed phrases.

*How she understood Scripture by divine grace.*

40. She had, moreover, a full knowledge of the Latin language and a thorough understanding of the meaning of divine Scripture, although from birth she was entirely illiterate, and when she was asked by certain spiritual friends she would answer with great precision their most obscure questions. Yet she chose to do this only rarely and very reluctantly, saying that to interpret Holy Scripture was the duty of the clergy and that this sort of ministry did not rightly belong to her. Because of her intense love for Christ, she had a wondrous reverence for the clergy and especially for the priests, although she suffered in return many injuries from them. Priests and clerics who had sinned she sweetly admonished in private and with remarkable reverence, as if they were her own father, warning them not to defame the good name of Christ among the people by their transgressions.

*How much she was venerated by Count Louis.*

41. A great noble, Louis Count of Looz, learning of her distinguished reputation for sanctity, began to love her with all his heart and to pay sincere heed to her words and counsel. Wherever he saw her he rose and rushed to meet her and called her *mother*. But when he had committed some offence against justice, or against the church of Christ or its ministers, she grieved for him as a mother for her son, and going to him in his palace she upbraided him with a mother's freedom, and obtained from him whatever amends that justice required.

*What stirring words she spoke.*

42. And indeed one day when this same Count Louis was reclining in the churchyard surrounded by a large retinue of knights, she stole up and stood over his head. Lifting up her eyes and hands she began to speak in a remarkably lovely voice: "O how beautiful you are, O Lord!" The knights hearing this said to the count: "Do you hear, Lord Count, how this holy woman praises you?" And the Count replied: "I know whom she praises. It is not I but her heavenly Lord, who is the creator of all beauty, and is the most beautiful of all." Then she said: "You have spoken the truth. Why then do you not love Him?"

*How she predicted trouble for this same count.*

43. Once this same count in his palace at Looz, now demolished, was lying on a cushion talking with the Duke of Limburg and another count around noon in the summertime. Christina boldly ran up and cried to Count Louis: "O wretched man, with whom do you now hold colloquy? Lo, there is one who treats you as a friend but is an enemy who is now reaching out his hand to betray you." Then the traitor, shuddering at the words of the woman, fell silent for the moment, and he concealed the truth with his words, but the outcome confirmed her prediction.

*What she did at the death of the count.*

44. This same Count Louis, when he was at the point of death, had Christina summoned to him and earnestly implored her to remain with him until the hour of his death. When she kindly assented, he bid all those who were with him to leave the bedroom; Christina alone he kept with him in his chamber. Thereupon the Count, with what little strength he had, arose and prostrated himself at Christina's feet, and weeping copiously recited all his sins to her from the age of eleven up to that very day. He did this not for absolution, which she had not the power to grant, but so that by this act of atonement she might be moved to pray for him the more. After this the Count had all his people summoned to his bedroom, and arranging his affairs according to the counsel of Christina, he died. And she saw his soul being delivered to purgatory to be tormented by the bitterest punishments.

*How she shared the punishments of purgatory with the soul of the count.*

45. The pious woman greatly pitied him, and she prevailed upon God to allow her to share with him his punishments in purgatory. Indeed, when he had appeared before her after his death to seek her aid, Christina said to

him: "Go now and depart from here and suffer the punishments for your sins according to the divine judgement; I for my part shall inflict punishments on my body and take upon myself half a share of your purgatory." When these things were so done, you could see Christina for a long time afterwards in the hours of night being tortured by flaming heat and sometimes by icy cold. And it is certain that the soul of the Count was being tortured too with these alternating torments. And in the places where the Count had often sinned she wept inconsolable tears, and experienced pain where he had experienced empty pleasures.

*How she behaved in the last year of her life.*

46. In the final year of her life she frequently abided in solitude in the wilderness, returning only rarely, when she was compelled by the spirit to tend to the salvation of men or to take food. In that period no mortal could restrain her when she felt the yearning to go out into the wilderness. When she returned no one dared greet her or ask her any question. For at times when she returned at dusk she passed through the midst of the house like a spirit over the ground, and one could scarcely tell whether it was a spirit or a body that was passing by, since she seemed to scarcely touch the earth. In that final year of her life, the spirit had so nearly taken full possession of her animal body, that human minds and eyes could scarcely look upon the shadow of that body without fear and trembling of the spirit. When she returned to the town of St. Trond, she would quite often stay in the convent of St. Catherine.

*The story the lord Thomas, abbot of St. Trond, told of her.*

47. The venerable Thomas, now the abbot of St. Trond but then a priest of the city, recounted to me a story about Christina that very much merits retelling. One day at dawn he was returning home from matins with a comrade and lo, Christina passed him in a violent rush and entered the church. They followed her without her knowledge and watched in secret from behind a pillar, to see what she would do or what her prayers would be. Immediately she threw herself before the altar like a sack of dry bones. Then groaning heavily without cease she began to pound her chest and body with her fists, saying: "O wretched and miserable body, how long will you torture me in my sorrow? What are you doing with me? Why do you detain for so long my unhappy soul? How long will you keep me from the sight of Christ? When will you leave me, so that my soul might be free and return to its creator? Woe to you, miserable wretch! And woe to me who am joined to you!"

48. Saying these and other such things she pommelled her body. Then

assuming in turn the role of the body, as if addressing the spirit she said: "O wretched soul, why do you torment me so? What holds you in me, and what pleasure can you take from me? Why do you not allow me to return to the earth from which I came and to rest, until I am reunited with you on the day of the last judgement? Why do you not go to your rest, that you might enjoy better things in heaven?" Saying this she sighed and moaned and wept. Then as she rested for a little in silence and in holy thought began to glow with a purer love for God, she burst into the sweetest laughter, and lifting up her feet with both hands she kissed the soles with the greatest affection and said: "O sweetest body! Why did I beat you? Why did I heap you with abuse? Did you not obey me in every good work I undertook to accomplish at the bidding of God? You endured the toils and torments which the spirit imposed with the greatest kindness and patience."

49. Again resuming her kissing she said: "Now endure in patience, my excellent and delightful body. The end of your labor is soon at hand. Soon you will rest in the dust and sleep for a little, and then at last when the trumpet sounds you will cast off all corruption and rise again, and you will be joined with the soul in perpetual joy, whom you have had in this life as a companion in sorrow." Soothing her body with such words and with kisses, after a while she poured forth the wondrous song of praise which we spoke of before, and she was filled with such joy within that you would think her body was bursting. Truly marvelous is God in his saints, and in this saint, I might say, marvelous beyond all admiration!

*The manner of her life before her death.*

50. At the end of her life she ate very rarely and sparingly. She did not want to sit and talk with the sisters and religious as she had before, but after a small meal and a short sleep, when it was not yet midnight she would go out into the wilderness. Never in those days did anyone see a smile on her face. She was like one who had been driven mad by too much sorrow. She walked about praying and moaning and pounding her chest, and this was because, as is believed by some, the Lord revealed to her more than usual about the state of the world and the evil in it. There was one thing that she very often deplored with marvelous wailing, that almost the whole human race was corrupt in the spilling of seed, and for that reason the wrath of God would soon fall with vengeance upon almost all of Christendom.

*On her languor before death.*

51. As the time approached when she would be held confined by the languor of death, she obtained such constant grace of contemplation that it was very troublesome to her to direct her mind elsewhere. At the end, then, retiring

from all affairs, she kindly asked a certain nun of St. Catherine's named Beatrice to prepare in secret a bed for her in a chamber, because the languor was imminent. When Beatrice readily did what she was asked, Christina lay down and was assailed by a worsening sickness. And when she had been confined by languor for three weeks she asked to receive in communion the body of the Lord and the oil of unction. When this was done, this Beatrice whom I mentioned earlier fell to her knees before her and asked that she inform her of certain matters before she departed life. And when Christina was silent, Beatrice, thinking that her thoughts were elsewhere, postponed the question, and leaving the chamber to perform some task, she left her in the meanwhile alone.

*On her second death, and how she again returned to life and died a third time.*

52. It is said by some that she often asked the Lord in life not to honor her with any miracles in death but to allow her to suffer the common death of men, and in this also she was heard by the Lord. For before Beatrice returned Christina was called by Christ and breathed her last. Immediately thereafter Beatrice returned with another sister and found the lifeless body of Christina on the ground, laid out in the manner of the dead, and I truly believe that this service was performed by angels. Then Beatrice, acting with great impatience, falls upon the body of the deceased, shouting and wailing violently. And when amidst her shouting she had asked the departed Christina again and again why she had gone away to the Lord without the leave and blessing of the sisters, she finally grew bolder, and with her face fixed on the face of the dead woman she said with great vehemence: "O Christina! You were always obedient to me in life. I pray and beseech you now through the Lord Jesus Christ, whom you loved in life with a burning desire, that you obey me now too. Since you now have the power, through Him with whom you are now joined, to accomplish whatever you wish, return to life and tell me what I fervently asked you to reveal to me when you were alive."

53. An astonishing thing! When Beatrice had shouted this into the dead woman's ear, Christina at once returned to her body and heaved a deep sigh, and with an anguished look upbraided Beatrice for calling her back. "O Beatrice," she said, "why did you disturb me? Why did you call me back? I was at that very moment being led to the presence of Christ. But now, my sister, quickly ask me what you want, and allow me, I beseech you, to return to the place I have long yearned for." Then Beatrice asked her question and received her reply. In the meantime the sisters of the convent had gathered around her. Signing them with the sign of the cross and saying the accompanying words, she experienced death for a third time, and died a

third time, and thus passed over into the eternal world without end.

*On the burial of Blessed Christina and the removal of her body.*

54. After she was resurrected from the dead for the first time she lived 42 years and died around the year of our Lord 1224. She was buried outside the town of St. Trond in the convent of St. Catherine and she reposed there for seven years, at which time they moved all the buildings of the convent to a more suitable site near the town. Then when all the townspeople had assembled, the clergy and the sisters of the convent went to the tomb of the blessed and revered Christina. And when they opened the tomb by removing the lid that covered it, so sweet a grace filled each and every one of them that all with one mind and one voice shouted that Christina was astonishing in life and no less glorious in death. Nor indeed do any doubt that a healing grace was conferred on those who approached her tomb with the proper faith. But we cannot speak further of these matters.

*The conclusion of the book.*

55. Behold then, reader, how great is our delinquency, when we see how Christina suffered so many punishments and torments not for herself but for her neighbors, and yet we shrink from doing penance for ourselves and for our sins. The day will surely come, and it will come soon, when we would gladly undergo greater punishments than these, if in answer to our plea we should be given the opportunity for penance and be permitted to relive those times that were wasted. And woe to those who want then to buy the oil of mercy, when the market-time has passed. They will knock at the door with an empty lantern and they will obtain no entry. Nay, rather it will be said to them: Amen I say to you, I do not know you. Therefore be watchful, for you know not the day nor the hour.

56. We have concluded then with a necessary argument for the sleeper, who heedless of the day and hour chose not to be watchful with a lamp filled with the oil of good works from the worthy fruits of penance. Therefore be watchful, for you know not the day nor the hour when your Lord will come. And what else did Christina proclaim throughout her life, if not that men should do penance and be prepared every hour? This she taught by her many words, by her tears, by her wailings, by her infinite cries, and by the example of her life, more than we have read or heard of anyone who came before or after her, for the praise and glory of Christ, who lives and reigns with the Father and Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

\* \* \* \* \*



57. It happened afterward in the year of our Lord 1249, that on a certain day early in the morning a woman, as it seemed, aged in body and clad in white, knocked at the gate. When she was led inside she asked to see a monk who was a priest. When she had been led to him, she said: "I have been sent by divine revelation to announce to you that you should remove from its resting place the body of a certain most holy woman, Christina by name, which was buried with negligence. If you do this, this place will attain grace and glory by her merits and prayers, but if you neglect it, you will be responsible for an offense against the divine will." And when the monk asked her to tell this instead to the prioress and the nuns of the convent, she was silent.

*On the second raising of her body.*

58. And immediately the monk went running to fetch the prioress and the sisters of the convent, but upon returning he could not find the woman. He ran hurriedly down various streets and sent others to do the same, but could not find anyone who had seen the woman either staying or leaving. Many indeed swore that they saw her entering the gate, and this was not unusual. For the angel Raphael judged that heavenly secrets should not be revealed to the multitude but only to Tobit and his son, and we see something similar happening here. The convent, hearing of these things and fearing lest, as has been said above, they should incur an offense against the divine will, swiftly and joyfully removed the sacred bones from the tomb, carefully washed and dried them, and then deposited them in a prominent place next to the altar.

*On the first miracle, which happened after the raising of her sacred body.*

59. Immediately after the body of Christina the Astonishing was raised from the tomb, a certain woman who lived near the convent had long been so weak and her limbs so powerless that she would have been unable to rise out of bed even if her house were burning. Inspired by the report of so wonderful an event, she pleads with her husband to be taken to the convent. He was moved by the tears of the woman and placed her in a conveyance commonly called a hay wagon and took her to the convent. Then carried by hand to the tomb, she was healed in all her limbs and she arose, and blessing Christ and his bride Christina she walked back home unaided.

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# Vita Sanctae Christinae Mirabilis Virginis

Auctore Thoma Cantipratano  
Ordinis Praedicatorum.

Editore Mark Reynolds.

## *Prologus*

1. Memorabilis Christi virginis Christinae vitam scribere disponentes, illud in exordio sermonis primitus inseramus quod venerabilis Jacobus Achonensis episcopus, postea Romanae curiae Cardinalis, in *Vita beatae Mariae de Oignies* de ipsa Christina per haec verba commemorat. "Vidi," inquit, "aliam" (Christinam intellige) "circa quam tam mirabiliter operatus est Dominus, quod cum diu mortua jacuisset, antequam in terra corpus ejus sepeliretur, anima ad corpus revertente revixit, et a Domino obtinuit ut in hoc seculo vivens in corpore purgatorium sustineret. Unde longo tempore ita mirabiliter a Domino afflicta est ut quandoque se volutaret in ignem, et quandoque in hieme in aqua glaciale diu moraretur, quandoque etiam sepulchra mortuorum intrare cogeretur. Tandem in tanta pace peracta poenitentia vixit et tantam a Domino gratiam promeruit ut multotiens rapta in spiritu animas defunctorum usque in purgatorium, vel per purgatorium sine aliqua sui laesione usque ad superna regna conducirer."

2. Haec igitur, ut diximus, praefatus venerabilis Jacobus episcopus de ea commemorat. Ego autem reliqua indignus F. Praedicatorum Ordinis ob aedificationem legentium et specialiter Christi laudem, licet imperito sermone, descripsi, certus utique relatione narrantium. Nec immerito certum me dixerim, cum tot plane testes habeam in pluribus quae descripsi quot tunc temporis in oppido Sancti Trudonis uti ratione potuerunt. Neque enim haec in angulo gesta sunt sed plane in populis; nec tantum temporis transiit quod ea absorbit et sepelivit oblivio, cum non eo amplius quam anni octo sint quo haec scripsi post mortem ejus. Alia vero quae nemo hominum scire potuit nisi ipsa, ab illis proprie audivi qui ea ab ore illius se percepisse testati sunt.

3. Et noverit quicumque legit haec talibus me testibus credidisse, qui nequaquam a centro veritatis etiam pro amputandis capitibus deviant. Fatemur quidem, et verum est, narrationem nostram omnem hominis intellectum excedere, utpote quae secundum cursum naturae fieri nequaquam possent, cum tamen sintabilia Creatori; nec ea ullo modo scribere praesumpsissem nisi me venerabilis Jacobi episcopi in majoribus rerum gestarum testimonium praecessisset. Hinc ergo opus aggredientes, in

primis quemadmodum nutrita sit, postmodum educata, atque inde cetera illius gesta, prout certissima et indubitabili relatione didicimus, exsequamur.

*Incipit Vita B. Christinae cognomento Mirabilis.*

4. Igitur memorabilis Christi virgo Christina ex oppido Sancti Trudonis in Hasbania honestis parentibus oriunda fuit. Haec, defunctis parentibus, cum duabus sororibus ipsa junior relicta est. Tunc sorores secundum religiosae vitae modum vitam suam disponere cupientes, sororem aetate majorem ut vacaret orationi, mediam ut domus curam ageret, juniorem autem Christinam ut ad pascua euntia pecora custodiret instituunt. Nec mora, viliori et humiliori officio deputatae Christus non defuit consolator; quin immo illi dedit gratiam internae dulcedinis secretisque caelestibus eam saepius visitabat. Mansit tamen cunctis incognita, solique Deo tanto notior quanto secretior.

*Quomodo mortua fuit.*

5. Et factum est post haec ut, ex interno contemplationis exercitio virtute corporis infirmata, vita excederet. Tunc positum in medio corpus exanime ab amicis et sororibus maxime lamentabatur. Mane ergo facto ad ecclesiam deportatur. Cumque pro depositione ejus missarum oblatio fieret, subito commotum corpus exsurrexit in feretro statimque instar avis evecta templi trabes ascendit. Fugientibus ergo cunctis qui aderant, sola soror aetate major cum timore remansit, ubi usque post Missam immobilis perseverans, a presbytero ecclesiae sacramento constricta, est coacta descendere. Horrebat enim, ut quidam autumant, subtilitas ejus spiritus odorem corporum humanorum. Mox cum sororibus reversa domi cibus refecta est. Tunc amici ejus spirituales accedentes ad eam sciscitati sunt ut quid vidisset vel quid passa fuisset vellet exponere.

*Quomodo educta est de corpore, et qualiter reducta ad corpus revixit.*

6. Statim, inquit, ut defuncta sum, susceperunt meam animam ministri lucis, angeli Dei, et deduxerunt me in locum quemdam tenebrosum et horridum, animabus hominum plenum. Tormenta quae in ipso loco videbam tanta et tam crudelia erant ut nulla lingua haec loqui sufficeret. Et vidi inibi multos defunctos quos dudum in carne cognoveram. Ego autem illas miseras animas non modice miserata, requirebam cujusmodi esset hic locus. Cogitabam autem hunc esse infernum. Et responderunt mihi ductores mei quia hic locus purgatorius est, in quo poenitentes peccatores in vita poenas luunt. Inde deduxerunt me ad tormenta inferni et agnovi etiam ibi quosdam quos viventes agnoveram.

7. Post haec delata sum in paradisum ad thronum divinae majestatis. Cumque congaudentem et congratulantem mihi Dominum viderem, super omnem modum gavisa sum, cogitans me perpetuo ex tunc cum Domino permansuram. Et Dominus statim respondit desiderio meo: Revera, inquit, dulcissima mea, hic mecum eris, sed nunc tibi duorum optionem propono: aut nunc scilicet permanere mecum, aut ad corpus reverti, ibique agere poenas immortalis animae per mortale corpus sine detrimento sui, omnesque illas animas quas in illo purgatorii loco miserata es, ipsis tuis poenis eripere; homines vero viventes exemplo poenae et vitae tuae converti ad me et a sceleribus resilire; peractisque omnibus ad me tandem multorum praemiorum mercede te cumulatam reverti. Respondi sine aliqua haesitatione sub conditione mihi proposita velle reverti.

8. Nec mora, mihi Dominus in responsione congratulans, jubet animam meam reduci ad corpus. Et videte quam veloces angeli ad praeceptum Domini! Ea etenim hora qua dicebatur in Missa pro me celebrata primo *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi*, anima mea throno divinae majestatis astabat. Ubi vero *Agnus Dei* tertio dicebatur, ab angelis velocibus restituta sum corpori. Sic modus regressionis meae et egressionis fuit, et ad correctionem hominum redonata sum vitae. Nunc ergo non conturbent vos illa quae visuri estis in me, quia super intellectum sunt illa quae Deus ordinabit mecum. Nec enim talia visa sunt inter mortales. Haec audientes amici ejus admirati sunt et cum stupore quae futura erant praestolabantur.

*Quomodo capta ab amicis et a Domino liberata, proprio virgineo ubere nutrita sit.*

9. Igitur post haec, cum Christina hominum praesentias miro horrore fugeret in desertis, in arboribus, in summitatibus turrium vel templorum vel quarumlibet rerum sublimium, putantes eam plenam daemonibus, tandem cum magno labore captam, vinculis eam ferreis manciparunt. Ubi dum multas poenas pateretur et penurias, maxime tamen in odore hominum, nocte quadam adjuta a Domino vinculis et compedibus solutis evasit fugitque in remotis deserti silvis et ibi in arboribus avium more vivebat. Cumque egeret cibo (nec enim, quamquam subtilissimum, corpus ejus sine victu esse poterat) et fame gravissima torqueretur, nullo modo tamen reverti volebat sed sola cum Domino in deserti secreto manere. Orationem ergo fundens ad Dominum, petivit supplex ut ejus angustias misericordiae suae oculis intueretur. Nec mora, ad se reflectens oculos, videt aridas mammas virginei pectoris sui, contra ipsa naturae jura, lactis stillare dulcedinem. Mira res, et post incomparabilem Christi Virginem Matrem cunctis seculis inaudita! Stillantem igitur liquorem in cibum sumens, novem hebdomadibus proprio virginei lactis ubere nutrita est. Interim ergo a suis requisita, inventa et rapta est, et ut prius vinculis ferreis mancipata: sed

frustra.

*Quomodo aquas ingrediebatur.*

10. Liberata enim a Domino venit apud Leodium civitatem. Quae sacrosanctas Agni immaculati paschalis carnes esuriens, supplicavit presbytero Sancti Christophori ut eam angustiatam in pluribus communione sancta muniret. Cumque sacerdos promitteret, sed se ad horam occupatum non posse diceret, illa dilationis impatiens venit ad alterius ecclesiae presbyterum et petiit corpus Christi. Qui mox precibus precantis assurgens communicavit eam. Nec mora, quodam impetu commota, diffugiens civitatem egressa est. Miratus ergo presbyter fugientem, concurrente alio presbytero Sancti Christophori, ambo eam usque ad fluentia Mosae fluminis insecuti sunt. Quam ad obvias aquas se comprehendere posse gavisi, cernunt stupidi ante se in vero corpore feminam quasi phantastico profundos aquae gurgites introire, et per aliam fluminis ripam ab aquis immunem exire.

*Quomodo cruciabatur in igne.*

11. Tunc coepit Christina agere illa propter quae a Domino remissa fuerat. Ingredebatur clibanos ignivomos ad coquendum panes paratos, cruciabaturque incendiis velut aliquis nostrum, ita ut horrice clamaret prae angustia, nec tamen in egredientis corpore laesura forinsecus apparebat. Clibanos non habens, in ignem copiosum in domibus hominum se projiciebat, vel pedes tantum vel manus mittebat tenebatque tam diu quousque, nisi divinum esset miraculum, redigi in cinerem potuissent. Intrabat etiam aliquando cacabos plenos bullientis aquae usque ad ubera, vel usque ad renes, secundum altitudinem cacaborum, et membris quae foris immunia a supplicio remanebant aquam fervidam superfundebat, clamabatque quasi parturiens, nec tamen egrediens habebat laesuram.

*Quomodo cruciabatur in aquis.*

12. Sub aquis Mosae fluminis glaciali tempore frequenter ac diutius morabatur, adeo ut in iis sex diebus et eo amplius permaneret. Sed veniebat presbyter qui ejus curam gerebat, stansque in ripa fluminis adjurabat eam per nomen Christi, et tunc illa coacta redibat. In hieme etiam sub rota molendini ibat erecta stare, ita quod aqua dilaberetur per medium caput et membra ejus. Veniebat etiam cum aqua natans aliquando cadebatque cum aqua super rotae circuitum, nec ulla laesura tamen apparebat in membris.

*Quomodo cruciabatur in rotis et patibulis.*

13. In rotis etiam in quibus piratae aliquando cruciari solebant, more

tortorum flectebat crura et brachia sua, et tamen cum descenderet non apparebat fractura in membris suis. Ibat etiam ad patibulum et se inter latrones suspensos laqueo suspendebat, ibique uno die vel duobus suspensa pendebat. Saepius quoque sepulchra mortuorum intrabat plangebaturque ibi peccata hominum.

*Quomodo cruciabatur in spinis et vepribus, et a canibus agitabatur.*

14. Media etiam nocte quandoque surgebat et canes totius civitatis Sancti Trudonis provocans ad latratus, quasi bestia fugiens praecurrebat, insequabanturque eam canes et per silvas atque condensa spinarum agitabant eam, ita ut nulla pars corporis ejus a plaga remaneret immunis, et tamen cum sanguinem diluisset, nullum laesurae vestigium apparebat. Hoc idem per se cum spinis et vepribus faciebat, ita ut sanguine per totum corpus perfusa undique videretur. Unde multi qui saepius hoc videbant mirati sunt unde tantus sanguis in uno corpore abundabat. Exceptis enim istis effusionibus sanguinis, ex vena saepissime multum valde sanguinem minuebat.

*De subtilitate corporis ejus.*

15. Corpus ejus tantae subtilitatis et levitatis erat ut in arduis et sublimibus ambularet, et instar passeris in subtilissimis arborum ramusculis dependeret.

*Qualis efficeretur dum orabat.*

16. Cum orare vellet, in summitatibus arborum vel turrium vel quarumlibet rerum sublimium fugere cogebatur, ut ibi remota ab omnibus sui spiritus requiem inveniret. Iterum cum oraret et contemplationis in ea gratia divina descenderet, velut calefacta cera omnia membra ejus in unum globum concludebantur, nec poterat in eis nisi tantum corpus sphaericum deprehendi. Cumque spiritali ebrietate digesta actuales sensus propria membrorum loca reciperent, instar ericei conglobatum corpus redibat ad formam et extendebantur membra, quae sub informi prius materia clauderantur. Super palos etiam saepium frequenter stabat erecta et ibi Psalmorum decantabat cursum. Quippe grave illi admodum erat interim terram attingere.

*Qualiter tibia ejus confracta, capta est et liberata a Domino.*

17. Pro his et hujusmodi sorores ejus et amici erubescerent non modice, eo quod eam homines plenam daemonibus reputarent, nequissimum quemdam et fortissimum virum conveniunt qui accepta mercede eam insequeretur ac caperet et vinctis ferreis manciparet. Cumque nequam ille eam per deserta

insequeretur nec manibus eam capere posset, semel tandem attingens eam, tibiam ipsius clava confregit. Qua deportata domi, medicum sorores ejus mercede conducunt qui confractae tibiae illius curam impenderet. Deducta est ergo apud Leodium in curru.

18. Conscius autem medicus fortitudinis illius, eam in cellario ex omni parte murato, vinculis fortiter constrictam et ad columnam ligatam, januis obseratis inclusit. Cumque fascibus medicinalibus tibiam illius stringeret et foveret, medico recedente, apposita detrahebat, indignum ducens alium suis plagis medicum adhiberi praeter Salvatorem nostrum Jesus Christum. Nec illam fefellit Omnipotens. Nam nocte quadam cum divinitatis in eam spiritus irruisset, solutis vinculis quibus ligata erat, sanata ab omni incommodo, per aream cellarii deambulabat, tripudians, laudans et benedicens illum cui soli mori et vivere delegisset. Claustris ergo celarii spiritus ejus arctari se sentiens, arrepto saxo de area cellarii, in spiritu vehementi murum pervium fecit; et ut utamur exemplo, velut sagitta quae quanto fortius in arcu stringitur tanto robustius jaculatur, sic spiritus ejus ultra quam justum erat arctatus cum ipso carnea molis corpore per aëris vacuum instar volucris volasse perhibetur.

*Qualiter oleum fluxit de mammillis ejus, et sic libera dimissa est ab amicis suis.*

19. Nec sic tamen sorores et amici ejus ab ipsius persecutione cessarunt. Nam ubi eam reversam comprehendere potuerunt, in scapulo quodam ligneo vinculis eam fortiter ligaverunt pascebaturque instar canis pane modico et aqua tantum. Ut ergo praerogativum in ea virtutis suae miraculum Christus ostenderet, superari eam ad tempus ac tribulari sustinuit. Duritia ergo ligni nates ejus attritae et humeri computrescebant, horumque dolore tabescens panem suum manducare non poterat. Nullo ergo ejus miseriis compatiante, mirifice eam miseratus est Dominus perfecitque in ea illud insigne miraculum cunctis retroactis seculis inauditum. Virginea enim ubera ejus clarissimi olei liquorem coeperunt effluere. Quem illa in condimentum sicci panis assumens pro pulmento habebat et pro unguento, liniebatque ex eo vulnera membrorum suorum putrescentium. Quod ubi sorores ejus et amici viderunt, coeperunt flere, nihilque ulterius divinae voluntati in Christinae miraculis renitentes, eam solverunt a vinculis veniamque prostrati de injuria postulantes, liberam dimiserunt.

*Quomodo communis oratio facta est a religiosis pro ea.*

20. Tunc libertate pro licito vel libito utens agebat poenas pro peccatis hominum, secundum quod supra dictum est. Cumque multi pro videndis mirabilibus Dei in Christina ex propinquis et longinquis extremisque

regionibus quotidie convenirent, religiosi viri ac mulieres qui in praedicto oppido erant, horrentes ne suprema mirabilium admiratio humanum sensum excederet converterentque bestiales hominum mentes in malignam operationem facta divina, maxime in iis, quod fugiendo hominum praesentias ardua quaeque velut avis ascenderet, et in aquis quasi piscis diutius moraretur, rogaverunt sedulis precibus Dominum ut miracula sua in Christina secundum communem statum hominum temperaret. Nec sprevit Dominus pie lacrymantium preces.

*Quomodo contemperata est vita ejus hominibus.*

21. Factum est enim die quadam ut agitata a spiritu vehementissime, ad ecclesiam quamdam in villa quae dicitur Guellen confugeret, inventoque aperto fonte sacro baptismi, illi se totam immergeret. Quo facto, hoc inibi dicitur consecuta quod contemperatior ex tunc fuit modus ejus vitae hominibus, quietiusque se habuit postea, et melius pati potuit odores hominum et inter homines habitare.

*Quomodo cogeatur a spiritu eleemosynis vivere.*

22. Sacramentum Dominici corporis et sanguinis frequenter, et maxime diebus Dominicis, in sancta devotione sumebat, recipiebatque in eo robur corporis, ut dicebat, et maximam laetitiam spiritus. Proinde nihil eorum quae propria pro Christo reliquerat, vel ad se jure hereditario pertinere debebant, uti in cibum vel potum poterat, sed communibus hominum eleemosynis quas ostiatim quotidie mendicabat, ut eorum peccata portaret quorum eleemosynis pascebatur. Dicebat autem quod ea de causa a Dei spiritu cogeatur sceleratorum hominum eleemosynas mendicare, ut per has ad horrorem peccatorum et vitae poenitentiam vocarentur. Aiebat enim quod nulla re magis Deus erga peccatores ad misericordiam flecteretur quam dum peccatores erga proximos misericordia moverentur. Unde illud viri sapientis: Numquam misericordia, numquam pietas potuit nisi in bonum claudere ultimum diem. Et ut haec exemplo pateant, quodam facto Christinae quae diximus confirmemus.

*De illo a quo potum accepit.*

23. Accidit ut quadam die, ad sitim intolerabilem divinitus excitata, ad mensam cujusdam sceleratissimi viri splendide epulantis accurreret, potumque poscens, ab illo insolita pietate commoto parum vini sumeret ad bibendum. Quapropter Christina dixit contra omnium opinionem qui virum noverant, eum in morte ad poenitentiae et contritionis veniam fuisse vocatum.



*Qualiter ei erat cum malefactorum eleemosynas ederet; et de cibo vel habitu ejus.*

24. Haec causa, ut diximus, fuit pro qua mendicare publicanorum eleemosynas cogeatur. Et tamen cum injuste aliquid acquisitum et sibi in eleemosynam datum comederet, videbatur ei quod ranarum ac bufonum viscera aut intestina serpentium deglutiret. Unde in esu talium clamabat quasi parturiens: O Christe, quid agis mecum? Sic quare me crucias? Tundensque pectus et corpus dicebat: O anima misera, quid desideras? Quid concupiscis haec horrida? Cur iis sordibus vesceris? Hoc ergo illi tormentum cum adeptum injuste quid ederet. Nec minori tamen cruciabatur poena cum sceleratus quispiam postulatum ab ea aliquid denegaret. Accidit aliquando ut denegatum ab impio aliquid vi auferret dicens: Etsi modo non vis, postea tamen non dolebis ablatum, et tunc proderit tibi quod modo non prodest.

25. Cum illi deesset manica in tunica sua vel caputium in scapulari, obvium aliquem habens de quo hoc suscipere, spiritu interius admonita, debuisset, rogabat illum. Quod si daret agebat gratias; sin autem, denegatum auferebat invito propriisque vestibus assuebat. Nec erubescibat si confusae essent manicae in una tunica colore dispariles. Vestes ejus erant tunica alba et scapularium album tegens totum corpus usque ad pedes, nec aliis frequenter consutum filis nisi corticis arboris tiliae vel viminibus salicis vel ligneis parvisque verubus. Calceamento carebat, nudis incedens pedibus temporibus indiscretis. Escis vilibus et abjectis pro epulis utebatur, et scutellarum lavaturas quae projici debebant, aqua apposita bulliebat, et hoc cum pane furfureo ac duro nimis, emollito tamen prius in aqua, sumebat in cibum. His biduo vel plerumque triduo continuato jejunio vescebatur.

*De dolore ejus et planctu quem pro damnandis habebat, et de gaudio pro salvandis.*

26. Honores summo studio fugiebat et gloriam, dicebatque pro hujusmodi maxime illos in inferno vel purgatorio cruciari, quibus agnitionem veritatis suae Christus in vita donaverat. Quasi maerens<sup>1</sup> et lugens semper incedebat, quippe cui Deus morientium quotidie vel ad salutem vel ad interitum merita revelabat. Cum aliquis in urbe defunctus esset quem damnatum pro culpa per spiritum cognovisset, flebat ac torquebat et retorquebat se, curvabatque se ac incurvabat et recurvabat brachia ac digitos suos, velut si sine ossibus essent mollitiae flexibiles. Ipse autem dolor ejus intolerabilis erat cunctis videntibus, ut nulla eum duritia hominum sine maxima sui contritione atque compassione sustinere valeret. Pro iis vero qui salvandi discedebant, tanto tripudio resultabat quod miro modo esset

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<sup>1</sup> AS moriens RV merens

mirabile eam in tanta jocunditate videre. Unde illi qui ejus virtutem spiritus cognoscebant facile animadvertere poterant in gaudio eius<sup>2</sup> vel maerore quid in urbe esset morientibus affuturum.

27. Libentissime ac benignissime morientibus assistebat, exhortans ad peccatorum confessionem et poenitentiae fructum, ad spem perennis gaudii et horrorem exitialis incendii. Nec hoc solum in Christianos morientes, verum etiam in Judaeos, quorum congregatio in urbe maxima erat, mirabili compassione sollicita faciebat. Misericordissimum autem Christum Dominum referebat, in eos tamen qui ad ipsum converti vellent, et invitum valde illum vindictam sumere de peccatis hominum, et contristari eum quotiens hoc facere peccatis hominum exigentibus cogeretur; occasiones vero ipsum diligenter inquirere per quas salutem miseris dare possit. Et perfundebatur mira oris gratia quando de Christo Domino hoc dicebat.

28. Referebat autem locum esse vicinum inferis in purgationem eorum constitutum a Deo, qui immanibus sceleribus foedati erant, contriti tamen fuerant in extremis. Hunc locum in tantum cruciatibus horridum referebat quod nulla ei ad supplicia inferorum esset distantia, excepto quod ii qui in his suppliciis vexabantur spe veniae suspirabant. Iis in tortura daemones praeesse dicebat, ipsosque in tormentum daemonibus traditos tanto ab eis acerbius cruciari, quanto se in his breviora cruciandi tempora habere cognoscunt.

*Quomodo claruit spiritu prophetiae. Quomodo praedixit quamdam occisionem.*

29. Spiritu prophetiae in multis claruit, et multos praemonuit ad salutem, multos de secretis et occultis sceleribus in occulto redarguit et ad poenitentiam revocavit. Quando illa miserabilis congressio facta est inter ducem Brabantiae et ejus adversarios, ubi in loco qui dicitur Steps tot centena hominum occisa sunt, ipsa beata mulier eadem die clamabat quasi parturiens atque dicebat: Heu, heu! Video aërem gladiis et sanguine plenum. Currite sorores, currite; rogate Dominum; lachrymas fundite ne contineat in ira misericordias suas. Et cuidam moniali in ipso monasterio Sanctae Katerinae dixit: Curre, filia, curre ad orationem velociter et roga Dominum pro patre tuo, quia in maximo nunc discrimine constitutus est.

*Quomodo praedixit apostasiam monialis.*

30. Verum cum quaedam monialis ipsius monasterii exitum cogitaret, de ea Christina dixit: O vas vacuum, in scandalum monasterii maximum

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<sup>2</sup> RV eius AS omittit

profuturum! Nec diu postea extitit, cum secundum verbum Christinae de Ordine apostavit et per incontinentiam suam maximum monasterio scandalum fecit. Cumque conventus monasterii super modum difficilis esset ut eandem monialem revertentem ad poenitentiam reciperet, Christina conventum redarguit dicens: Licet vos parum reputetis perditionem ejus, non tamen ita parum anima illius constitit Christo, qui pro ea sanguinem fundens mori dignatus est. Nec destitit Christina haec ingeminans donec monialis poenitens reciperetur.

*Quomodo protexit precibus quemdam nobilem peregrinantem.*

31. Quidam fuit nobilis ultra mare ad sepulchrum Domini proficiscens. Rogata et jurata est Christina ab uxore dicti nobilis ut eum prece sua salvum ac sanum reduceret. Cujus adjurationem gravem ducens, Christina multas tamen preces, labores et vota pro milite Domino obtulit eumque sanum reduxit, et dixit uxori ejus quasi obstomachans: Ecce per importunitatem adjurationis tuae sanum reduxi virum tuum, sed scito nunc quod non diu tamen ejus praesentia laetaberis. Cujus verbum non multo post verum apparuit, cum paucis evolutis diebus vir ille nobilis ab hac vita migravit et uxorem ac filios in desolatione et tristitia dereliquit.

*Quomodo praedixit Jerusalem captivandam, et diem quando capta est nuntiavit.*

32. Sed et multo ante tempore praedixit quod terra sancta Jerusalem Saracenis impiis subderetur. Cumque venisset dies quo a Solahadino, rege Persarum, capta fuit Jerusalem cum sepulchro Domini et Cruce Christi, ipsa in castro de Loen posita rei eventum cognovit in spiritu. In quo facto vehementer exultans, rogabatur a praesentibus causam tantae exultationis edisserere. Recte, inquit, exulto, quia Christus Dominus hodie cum angelis laetabundus exultans occasionem dedit qua humani generis multitudo salvetur.

33. Cumque praesentes inquirerent quae esset occasio: Terram, inquit, Sanctam hodie impiorum manibus traditam cognoscatis magnamque occasionem per hoc datam salutis. Dignam enim Christus suam contumeliam ducit ut terra tradatur in dedecus, licet consecrata suae praesentia passionis, peritura tamen cum mundo in fine mundi, cum per recuperationem ejus animae perpetuo permansurae et suo sanguine redemptae a via impietatis ad viam justitiae convertentur, fundentque homines sanguinem in negotio Terrae Sanctae, vicemque mortis Christo in magna devotione rependent. Tunc omnes qui aderant admirantes, nonnulli eorum notant tempus, et reperiunt eandem diem, post tempus scilicet, quo peragrato itinere interjacente, fama ad transmarinos potuit pervenire.

*Quomodo praedixit maximam famem futuram.*

34. Famem etiam maximam quae fuit anno circiter ab Incarnatione Domini MCLXX, multo tempore ante praedixit. Alia quoque multa nimis quae jam adimpleta sunt et quae adimplenda credimus Christina praedixit.

*De raptu eius in spiritu et cantu mirabili in praedicto monasterio.*

35. Proinde cum esset familiaris valde monialibus Sanctae Katerinae extra oppidum Sancti Trudonis, et cum ipsis aliquando sedendo loqueretur de Christo, subito et inopinate rapiebatur a spiritu corpusque ejus velut trochus ludentium puerorum in vertiginem rotabatur, ita quod ex nimia vehementia vertiginis nulla in corpore ejus membrorum forma discerni posset. Cumque diutius sic rotata fuisset, ac si vehementia deficeret, membris omnibus quiescebat, sonabatque proinde inter guttur et pectus ejus quaedam harmonia mirabilis, quam nemo mortalium vel intelligere posset vel aliquibus artificiis imitari. Solam flexibilitatem musicae et tonos ille ejus cantus habebat; verba vero melodiae, ut ita dicam, si tamen verba dici possunt, incomprehensibiliter concrepabant. Nulla interim de ore ejus vel naso vox vel anhelitus spiritalis exibat, sed inter solum pectus et guttur harmonia vocis angelicae resonabat.

36. Interim quiescentibus membris omnibus, oculorum ejus palpebrae instar dormientium claudebantur. Tunc post aliquanta spatia, ad se paulisper reversa quasi ebria, et vere ebria consurgebat, clamabatque vociferans: Adducite mihi conventum ut summae benignitatis Jesum in suis mirabilibus collaudemus! Mox undique concurrente conventu (laetabatur enim multum Christinae solatio) inchoabat, *Te Deum laudamus*, et prosequentibus omnibus finiebat. Postea vero cum ad plenum reversa esset ad se cognosceretque, recitantibus aliis, quid egisset, et conventum ad Christi laudem qualiter invitasset, prae pudore et erubescencia fugiebat, vel si vi ab aliqua detineretur, dolore nimio tabescebat stultamque se ac fatuam indicabat.

*Quomodo insultabat mundo quod creatorem non agnoscerent.*

37. Dicebat autem quandoque, de jam dicto statu ad se reversa, in magna amaritudine cordis: O miserum et miserabilem mundum, non agnoscentem factorem suam! Quare non servis ei? Quare longanimitatem ejus patientiae non consideras? Bonitatem ejus si videres, etiam ab alio contradicente mundo, averti non posses quin eum diligeres. Sed aversus es, o munde miserabilis; clausisti oculos et intelligere noluisti. Haec dicens clamabat velut parturiens et contorquebat membra sua volutabaturque in terra cum ejulatu

maximo, ingeminans quare mundus non agnosceret creatorem suum.

*Quomodo dereliquit sua et venit apud Loen.*

38. Post haec de domo propria et cognatione digressa, castrum in confinio Alamanniae, quod Loen dicitur, expetivit, ubi cum quadam religiosissimae vitae reclusa, Ivetta nomine, moram per novennium faciens, mira per eam operatus est Dominus. A qua reclusa multa quae de Christina scripsi revelata suscepi. De longinquis enim Galliarum partibus ad eam propter hoc veni.

39. Igitur in eodem loco, omni nocte Christina Matutinorum frequentans vigiliis, recedentibus omnibus de ecclesia et obseratis januis, per aream pavimenti ecclesiae deambulans, canticum tantae dulcedinis emittebat ut potius videretur cantus angelicus quam humanus. Cantus ille tam mirabilis erat auditu ut omnium musicorum instrumenta, omnium mortalium voces excelleret; minor tamen et longe impar dulcedine illius harmoniae jubilo qui dum mente excederet inter guttur et pectus ejus resonabat. Cantus, inquam, iste Latinus erat, mirisque consonantium clausulis exornatus.

*Quomodo divinitus intelligebat Scripturas.*

40. Intelligebat autem ipsa omnem latinitatem et sensum in Scriptura divina plenissime noverat, licet ipsa a nativitate litteras penitus ignoraret, et earum obscurissimas quaestiones spiritualibus quibusdam amicis, cum interrogaretur, enodatissime reserabat. Invitissime tamen ac rarissime facere voluit, dicens Scripturas sanctas exponere proprium esse clericorum, nec ad se hujusmodi ministerium pertinere. Clerum ac maxime sacerdotes propter nimium amorem Christi miro modo venerabatur, cum tamen versa vice multas ab eis injurias pateretur. Peccantes sacerdotes vel clericos secretius et cum mira reverentia quasi proprios patres dulciter admonebat, ne bonum nomen Christi per excessus suos in populis blasphemarent.

*Quantum venerabatur a comite Luduico.*

41. Cujus sanctitatem vir nobilissimus Luduicus scilicet comes de Loen celebri fama cognoscens, coepit eam ex corde diligere et ejus consiliis ac colloquiis sinceriter inhaerere. Ubi cumque vidisset eam, assurgebat et occurrebat ei matremque vocabat. Cum autem aliquid idem comes contra justitiam vel ecclesiam Christi aut ministros ejus exercuisset, ipsa quasi mater de filio dolebat pro eo, adiensque eum in palatio consistentem, materna illum fiducia arguebat obtinebatque ab eo quidquid pro satisfactione et justitia debuisset.

*Quam excitantia verba habuit.*

42. Et quidem cum idem Luduicus comes die quadam acclinis in atrio ecclesiae jaceret multo milite stipatus, illa superveniens clam capiti comitis imminebat. Quae oculis ac manibus elevatis dicere coepit cum mira oris gratia: O quam pulcher es, Domine! Quod milites audientes dicebant comiti: Audisne, domine comes, qualiter haec sancta te laudat? Et comes: Novi, inquit, quem laudat. Non sum ego, sed laudat caelestem Dominum suum, qui pulchritudinum creator est et pulcherrimus omnium. Tum illa: Verum, inquit, dixisti. Tu ergo cur istum non diligis?

*Quomodo eidem comiti molestias praedixit.*

43. Idem ipse comes aliquando in palatio suo apud Loen, quod nunc destructum est, cum Limburgensi et cum alio comite hora meridiana super culcitram in aestate colloquendo jacebat. Ad quorum colloquium Christina constanter accurrens inclamat comiti Luduico: O miserrime, cum quibus nunc agis colloquium? Ecce tecum quasi amicus agit, qui inimicus jam manum proditurus apponit. Mox vocem feminae proditor ille perhorrens, ad horam conticuit, verumque verbis dissimulans, eventum rei exitus approbavit.

*Quid egit in morte dicti comitis.*

44. Hic idem Luduicus comes cum in extremis ageret, Christinam ad se vocari fecit, eam obnixius postulans ut secum usque ad horam sui obitus remaneret. Qua favente benignius, comes omnes qui cum eo erant secedere jubet a thalamo; Christinam autem solam secum retinuit in conclavi. Nec mora, comes virtute qua potuit erexit se et supplex ante pedes Christinae toto corpore factus, ei omnia peccata sua ab anno aetatis suae undecimo usque ad diem illam cum maximis lacrymis recitavit; et hoc non pro indulgentia, quam dare non potuit, sed ut magis ad orandum pro eo hoc piaculo moveretur. Post haec comes omnes suos intra thalamum vocari fecit, et secundum consilium Christinae sua disponens mortuus est. Et vidit illa animam ejus tradi ad purgatorium, poenis acerrimis cruciandam.

*Quomodo partita est purgatorii poenas cum anima comitis.*

45. Quem pia mulier non modice miserata, a Domino obtinuit ut cum illo exactura in purgatorio supplicia partiretur. Nempe cum illi post mortem apparuisset auxilium petiturus, dixit ad eum Christina: Age nunc et vade hinc, et secundum divinum iudicium poenas pro peccatis exsolve; ego vero in meo corpore exactura tormenta dimidiam purgatorii tui partem excipio. His ita gestis, videres Christinam multo post tempore nocturnis horis flammeis vaporibus, interdum vero frigoribus algoribus cruciari; et certum,

secundum quod anima comitis alternatis cruciatibus torquebatur. Loca etiam in quibus dictus comes peccare solebat, irremediabilibus lacrymis irrigabat, et in quibus laetatus ille inaniter fuerat, ista dolebat.

*Qualiter se habuit in ultimo anno vitae suae.*

46. In ultimo vitae suae anno solitudo illi et desertum frequenter habitaculum erant; revertebaturque, licet rarissime, cum ad salutem hominum aut ad sumendum cibum a spiritu cogeretur. Retinere eam illo in tempore nemo mortalium posset cum anhelaret ad deserta transire. Cum reverteretur, nemo eam salutare, nemo aliquid interrogare audebat. Vespere enim aliquando revertens transibat per mediam domum quasi spiritus super terram, vixque discerni poterat si spiritus transibat aut corpus, cum terram vix tangere videretur. Adeo enim in illo extremo vitae suae anno in omnibus fere partibus animale corpus sic spiritus obtinuerat, ut humanae mentes vel oculi vix possent ejus corporis umbram sine horrore et tremore spiritus intueri. Reversa autem tunc ad oppidum Sancti Trudonis, in monasterio Sanctae Katerinae saepius morabatur.

*Narratio domini Thomae abbatis S. Trudonis de ea.*

47. Narravit mihi venerabilis Thomas, nunc abbas Sancti Trudonis, tunc vero presbyter civitatis, quoddam de Christina recitatione dignissimum. Ipse in aurora diei a Matutinis domum cum socio revertebatur, et ecce illa cum impetu transiens ecclesiam introivit. Quam clam secuti, illi post columnam ecclesiae secretius observabant quid illa ageret vel oraret. Nec mora, illa ante altare quasi saccum siccis plenum ossibus se projecit. Tunc ingemiscens graviter ac frequenter, tundere coepit pugnibus pectus et corpus suum, dicens: O miserum et miserabile corpus, quam diu me miseram cruciabis? Quid agis mecum? Quid tibi tam diu miseram animam detinere? Quam diu retardabis me a conspectu Christi? Quando derelinques me, ut anima ad creatorem suum libera revertatur? Vae tibi, miserrime, et vae mihi quae conjuncta sum tibi!

48. Haec et hujusmodi dicens tundeat corpus suum. Tunc iterum assumens personam corporis, quasi spiritui dicebat: O anima misera, sic quare me crucias? Quid te tenet in me, et quid te delectat ex me? Quare non sinis me redire ad terram unde assumptum sum et quiescere, quousque tibi in novissimi judicii die restituar? Quare non vadis ad requiem tuam ut fruaris potioribus in supernis? Haec dicens suspirabat et anhelabat et flebat. Nec mora, quiescens paululum cum silentio et cogitatione sancta in Deum sincerius incalescens, in risum dulcissimum resolvebatur, et tollens ambabus

manibus pedes suos, cum maximo affectu deosculabatur plantas suas<sup>3</sup> atque dicebat: O dulcissimum corpus, quare verberavi te? Quare convicia intuli tibi? Numquid obedisti mihi in omne opus bonum quod Deo auctore aggressa sum facere? Tu tormenta, tu labores benignissime ac patientissime pertulisti quae spiritus imponebat.

49. Iterum ingeminans oscula dicebat: Nunc patienter sustine, o meum optimum et dulcissimum corpus. Jam finis instat laboris tui; jam quiescens in pulvere paululum dormitabis, et tunc demum, canente tuba, deposita omni corruptibilitate, resurges et sociaberis animae in perpetuo gaudio, quam in praesenti tristitiae sociam habuisti. Talibus demulcens verbis et osculis corpus suum, post horam jubilum quem praediximus mirabilem emittebat, et tanta jocunditate interius replebatur, ut rumpi exterius in corpore crederetur. Vere mirabilis Deus in Sanctis suis, et in ista, ut ita dicam, super omnem admirationem mirabilis!

*Modus vitae ejus ante mortem.*

50. Cibo in extremo vitae suae tempore raro valde et modico pascebatur. Ad colloquium cum sororibus et religiosis, sicut ante consueverat, sedere nolebat, sed gustans modice et somno ad momenta refecta, nocte nondum media ad deserta transibat. Numquam in diebus illis risum quis vidit de ore ejus, sed erat similis illi qui nimio dolore amens effectus est. Orans, plangens incedebat et maerens. Et hoc ideo, ut creditur a quibusdam, quia ei solito amplius de statu mundi et malitia ejus Dominus revelavit. Unum erat quod cum miro ejulatu saepius deplangebatur, totum fere humanum genus in effusionibus seminum esse corruptum, et propter hoc iram Dei per vindictam toti fere Christianitati citius imminere.

*De languore ejus ante mortem.*

51. Ingruente vero tempore quo languore mortis debuit detineri, tam assiduam contemplationis gratiam adepta est ut molestum ei valde esset aliorum aciem mentis intendere. Extremo ergo quiescens ab omnibus, Beatricem quamdam Sanctae Katerinae monialem benigne rogavit ut sibi lectum secrete in thalamo praepararet, eo quod sibi languoris infirmitas immineret. Qua praesto faciente quod petiit, ipsa decubuit et ingravescente morbo exercebatur. Cumque per hebdomadas tres languore detenta fuisset, communionem corporis Dominici et unctionis oleum postulavit. Quo facto, ipsa quam praedixi Beatrix coram ea genibus provoluta rogavit ut certificaret eam in rebus aliquibus antequam vita excederet. Cumque reticeret illa, aliorum eam intentam existimans, distulit quaestionem exiensque

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<sup>3</sup> AS eius RV suas



thalamum aliquid factura, solam eam interim dereliquit.

*De morte ejus secunda, et qualiter iterum revixit et tertio mortua est.*

52. Proinde fertur a quibusdam eam saepius in vita rogasse Dominum ne eam in morte aliquibus miraculis honoraret, sed communi hominum morte defungi permetteret, et in hoc quoque a Domino exaudita est. Nam dicta Beatrix antequam reverteretur, vocante Christo, Christina spiritum exhalavit. Nec mora, reversa Beatrix cum quadam sorore invenit in terra corpus exanime, mortuorum more prostratum, et vere credo ministerio angelorum. Tunc Beatrix impatientius agens, ruit super defunctae corpus, clamans et ejulans vehementer. Cumque inter clamandum defunctam saepius interrogaret cur sine licentia, cur sine commendatione sororum abisset ad Dominum, tandem in spiritu vehementi, concepta fiducia, fixo vultu in ora defunctae, dixit: O Christina! Obediens semper mihi in vita fuisti. Adjuro ergo nunc te et contestor per Dominum Jesum Christum, quem in vita ardenti desiderio dilexisti, ut obedias mihi etiam nunc. Quia potens potes per illum cui nunc jungeris quaecumque vis, revertaris ad vitam et dicas mihi quod a te aperiendum in vita magno desiderio postulavi.

53. Mira res! Mox ubi hoc Beatrix mortuis auribus inclamavit, Christina reversa ad corpus grave suspirium edidit, anxioque vultu revocantem reverberans dixit: O Beatrix, quid me inquietasti? Quare revocasti me? Jam exhibenda ducebar ad conspectum Christi. Sed nunc, soror mi, quid vis festinanter interroga, et sinas me, obsecro, ad diu concupita reverti. Tunc Beatrix quod proponebat interrogans, responsum ab illa recepit. Interim aggregatis undique sororibus monasterii, illas crucis signo et verbo consignans, tertio experta est mortem et tertio obiit, et sic transiit ad immortalia secula seculorum.

*De sepultura B. Christinae et de translatione corporis ejus.*

54. Vixit autem postquam primo resurrexit a mortuis quadraginta duobus annis et defuncta est anno circiter ab Incarnatione Domini MCCXXIV. Sepulta est autem extra oppidum Sancti Trudonis in monasterio Sanctae Katerinae quievitque ibidem annis septem, usque ad tempus scilicet quo omne aedificium monasterii in locum magis congruum et proximum transtulerunt. Tunc universis civibus adunatis, ad tumulum beatae ac reverendae Christinae clerus et conventus monialium accesserunt. Quem dum dimoto desuper operculo aperuissent, tantae dulcedinis gratia cunctos universaliter et singulariter occupavit ut omnes una mente et uno ore pariter conclamarent Christinam in vita fuisse mirabilem, et post mortem nihilominus gloriosam. Nec enim ullus ambigit gratiam sanitatum collatam esse his qui cum fide debita ad ejus tumulum accesserunt. Sed nos

hujusmodi prosequi non valemus.

*Conclusio libri.*

55. Vide ergo, lector, quantis simus obnoxii, qui Christinam videmus tot tormenta, tot poenas non pro se sed pro proximis pertulisse, et nos pro nobis et nostris excessibus poenitentiam agere formidamus. Veniet certe dies, veniet et non tardabit, quod nos majora iis libenter aggredi tentaremus, si locus poenitentiae daretur poscentibus et ad neglecta quondam tempora redire liceret. Et vae iis qui oleum misericordiae tunc volunt emere, quando tempus nundinarum pertransivit. Et ideo lampade vacua pulsabunt ad januam et nullum aditum obtinebunt; quin immo dicetur eis: Amen dico vobis, nescio vos. Vigilate ergo, quia nescitis diem neque horam.

56. Argumento ergo necessario conclusum est dormienti, dum diem et horam negligens, noluit plena lampade oleo bonorum operum ex condignis poenitentiae fructibus vigilare. Vigilate ergo, quia nescitis diem neque horam qua Dominus vester venturus sit. Et quid aliud in omni vita sua Christina clamavit nisi poenitentiam agere et paratos esse homines omni hora? Hoc verbis multis, hoc fletibus, hoc ejulatibus, hoc clamoribus infinitis, hoc exemplo vitae plus docuit, plus clamavit quam de aliquo praecedentium vel subsequentium scripto vel relatione percepimus, in laudem et gloriam Christi, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat Deus, per omnia secula seculorum. Amen.

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57. Accidit autem post haec anno ab Incarnatione Domini MCCXLIX, ut die quadam summo mane ad portam mulier, ut videbatur, annosa corpore et habitu candidata pulsaret. Intromissa ergo, pro monacho et sacerdote quaesivit. Ad quem cum fuisset adducta, dixit illi: Missa sum ex revelatione divina ut annuntiem vobis quatinus corpus cujusdam sanctissimae feminae, Christinae nomine, sub negligentia positum relevetis a loco. Quod si feceritis, ipsius meritis et precibus gratiam locus iste consequetur et gloriam; si autem neglexeritis, offensam divini numinis incurretis. Cumque monachus rogaret eam ut haec potius priorissae monasterii diceret et conventui, illa reticuit.

*De secunda relevatione corporis ejus.*

58. Nec mora, currens monachus ut cum conventu adduceret priorissam, dictam personam rediens non invenit. Festinans ergo per diversas vias cucurrit et misit, nec invenit quemquam qui recedentem viderit aut

manentem. Introeuntem vero portam plures eam vidisse testati sunt, nec incongrue. Neque enim angelus Raphael multitudini secreta caelestia censuit revelanda, sed soli Tobiae cum filio. Et hoc modo hic non ab re cernimus accidisse. Haec audiens conventus et timens ne, sicut supra dictum est, divini numinis offensam incurreret, cum festinatione et gaudio ossa sacra tollentes de tumulo, lota diligenter et exsiccata juxta altare in loco celebri posuerunt.

*De primo miraculo, quod accidit post relevationem corporis sacri.*

59. Nec mora, postquam mirabilis Christinae corpus a tumulo relevatum est, mulier quaedam in vicinio monasterii a multo tempore ita languida et penitus membris destituta jacebat, ut a lecto, etiamsi arsisset domus, surgere non valeret. Fama ergo tantae rei confidentius excitata, orat virum suum ut ad monasterium deferatur. Qui lacrymis mulieris impulsus, eam vehiculo quod vulgariter currum herbarum vocant imposuit et ad monasterium usque deduxit. Hinc manibus perlata ad tumulum, membris omnibus sospitata surrexit, et benedicens Deo et sponsae suae Christinae, ad domum suam propriis viribus repedavit.

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## Annotationes Criticae

Haec nostra editio desumpta est e textu *Vitae S. Christinae Mirabilis Virginis* recognitae et illustratae per Joannem Pinium in *Actis Sanctorum (Acta Sanctorum, Julii, Tomus V; Antverpiae 1727; pp. 650-660)*. Animadversiones Pinii in fontes textus eius reperiri possunt in praefationis capitulo cui inscribitur *Varia Vitae exemplaria* (p. 639).

Duas alias versiones Vitae scrutatus sum: anonymam translationem Anglicam saeculi xv, quae in M.S. Douce 114 Bibliothecae Bodleianae continetur et typis impressa est in *Anglia* VIII anno 1885 (pp. 119-134); necnon versionem Surii descriptam a Pinio in praedicta praefatione (Laurentius Surius Carthusianus, *De probatis sanctorum historiis*, Tomus III, Coloniae Agrippinae 1572, pp. 778-789).

**1. cogeretur:** Pinius *cogebatur*.

**1. vixit:** Legitur hoc vocabulum in codicibus *Vitae Mariae de Oignies*: Pinius omittit.

**4.** Huic capitulo Pinius subjunxit sequentia verba: *Unde per Isaiam gloriatur dicens: Secretum meum mihi, secretum meum mihi. Est enim ipse verecundus amator*. Quae lectio videtur interpolatio esse, vel glossa marginalis quae in textum irrepsit. Deest in versionibus Suriana et Anglica.

**9. capta:** Pinius *rapta*.

**17. arctatus:** Post hoc vocabulum Pinius addit in parenthesi: *quia: Ubi spiritus Domini, ibi libertas*. Versiones Suriana et Anglica omittunt.

**18. murato:** Pinius *munito*.

**21. Guellen:** Pinius *Guelleir*.

**21. se habuit:** Pinius *habuit*.

**26. videre:** Pinius *vivere*.

**33. Tunc omnes qui aderant admirantes, nonnulli eorum notant tempus, et reperiunt eandem diem, post tempus scilicet, quo peragrato itinere interjacente, fama ad transmarinos potuit pervenire:** Verba nonnulla supplenda sunt quae sententiam hanc intelligibilem reddant. Haud verisimile est hanc lectionem fuisse autographi primigenii. Surius sententiam ita vertit, eventum prophetiae non memorans: *His dictis, mirabantur omnes, et quidam annotarunt tempus*. In versione Anglica legitur: *Then all that there were, mervelyd of, somme of hem notyd the tyme; and so it was after knowen that Christyn seyde byfore*.

**36. clamabatque:** Pinius *clamabat*.

**52. clamans:** Post hoc vocabulum Pinius iterat *super defunctae corpus*.

**53. diu concupita:** Pinius *Domini concupita*.

**57.** Pinius testatus est hoc et duo capitula sequentia exhiberi in uno solo ex suis exemplaribus (Ms. Camerense). Quae tria capitula etiam desunt in versionibus Suriana et Anglica.

Mark Reynolds Evergreen Cemetery Fayetteville Arkansas Christmas Day MMXXIV